

VZCZCXRO4062

RR RUEHBZ RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSB #0008/01 0091042

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

R 091042Z JAN 10

FM AMEMBASSY HARARE

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5285

INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 2415

RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 3239

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000008

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR BRIAN WALCH

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR MICHELLE GAVIN

ABUJA FOR POLITICAL OFFICER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2020

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S COURTESY CALL ON NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR
TO ZIM

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CHARLES A. RAY FOR REASONS 1.4 B,D

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Since Mugabe pulled Zimbabwe out of the British Commonwealth in December 2003 relations between Nigeria and Zimbabwe, while not hostile, have been decidedly cool. Mugabe blames Nigeria for plans to expel Zimbabwe, and believes the current Nigerian president is 'misinformed' about conditions here. Nigerian Embassy activity in Harare centers mostly around looking out for the welfare of some 5,000 Nigerian small traders and nearly 30 Nigerian citizens who are here as employees of international organizations. While Nigeria acknowledges that Mugabe's ZANU-PF has ruled poorly, there is concern that MDC-T is incapable of governing the country by itself. There are many 'pools' within ZANU-PF waiting for Mugabe to die, and when that happens, there will be an internal scramble to seize power which could spell chaos. There are also leadership struggles within MDC which, if they are not settled, will further compromise MDC's ability to develop into an effective governing party.

¶2. (C) Among the African ambassadors there is some concern, and a bit of resentment, at the appearance of exclusiveness of the European donors, as if the views of Africans are not valued. Some of this is created by the Africans (Zimbabweans) themselves. PM Tsvangirai, for instance, routinely holds separate meetings with the African ambassadors and the Europeans, providing different information to the two groups. Even the Zimbabwean Foreign Ministry (ZANU-PF-controlled) holds separate meetings. While there are significant differences in interests and priorities, there is a general feeling that more should be done to reconcile them.

¶3. (U) Representatives of West African nations here are often nonplussed at the cultural attitudes of Zimbabweans. They seem more placid and accepting of hardship than West African populations. END SUMMARY.

¶4. (U) I met with Nigerian Ambassador Kunle Adeyanju on January 7, at the Embassy of Nigeria in Harare. Adeyanju has been in Zimbabwe for 20 months. During that time, he has been occupied mostly with looking after the welfare of some

5,000 Nigerians resident in the country. Most of them are small traders, but there are also 25 or so Nigerians working here for international organizations. The traders deal in electronics and cosmetics, getting most of their wares from China.

¶ 15. (C) Adeyanju said that he has little or no political activity here. Since Mugabe pulled Zimbabwe pulled out of the British Commonwealth in December 2003, preemptively ahead of plans to expel the country from that body, relations between Nigeria and Zimbabwe, while not hostile, have been decidedly cool. Mugabe blames Nigeria for the planned expulsion. Adeyanju said that just two weeks before he was to present his credentials the current Nigerian president in a speech said that "Mugabe must go." The Zimbabwean Foreign Ministry had planned to cancel his presentation and withdraw QMinistry had planned to cancel his presentation and withdraw agrement, but Mugabe intervened, and at the ceremony said that Nigeria's president was 'misinformed' about conditions and events in Zimbabwe.

¶ 16. (C) There are many 'pools' of people within ZANU-PF, Adeyanju said, who are waiting for Mugabe to die, and when that happens, there will be a mad scramble to grab power. This will surely lead to chaos. Unfortunately, he lamented, there are also leadership struggles within Tsvangirai's MDC, and if these are not settled, it will compromise MDC's ability to be an effective part of government, or to lead any future government.

¶ 17. (C) Among the African Ambassadors here, there is a

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feeling of resentment at the 'exclusive' way Western (mostly EU) embassies conduct their business. They (western embassies) seem to be unaware that Africa has developed its own cadre of intellectuals and they would like their opinions valued. This attitude of separateness is also fed by the actions of Zimbabweans. PM Tsvangirai, for instance, holds separate meetings for African and Western ambassadors, and often provides the two groups with different information

(COMMENT: This is something that has bothered us as well. END COMMENT.), and they then have to ask at receptions and other meetings what was said in order to reconcile the different information. The Zimbabwean Foreign Ministry also holds different meetings with Western and African ambassadors, further creating a sense of apartheid.

(COMMENT: While the major Western donors likely have no desire to create such an impression, at times the Fishmonger Heads of Mission meetings resemble a 21st Century version of the 1884-85 Berlin Conference, with a bunch of Europeans sitting around a table deciding on the future of Africa. END COMMENT.) The problem with this, he said, is that it reinforces the impression of European control, especially of the MDC, which further erodes its ability to effectively govern on its own.

¶ 18. (U) West Africans who serve here are often nonplussed by the placidity and apparent tolerance for suffering and hardship of Zimbabweans. "They line up for hours to get a few dollars from their bank accounts," Adeyanju said. "Then, they go home and do their chores, and come back the next day and line up again. If this was Nigeria, we would burn the bank down." Adeyanju said that personal relations between the two peoples, however, are not difficult. Many Zimbabweans have studied in Nigeria, and until the economic crisis there were many Nigerian students and professors in Zimbabwe. Now there are only a few at the African University in Bulawayo.

¶ 19. (C) COMMENT: There were few surprises in Adeyanju's comments. I have heard them from almost every other African ambassador that I've met. While it is true that the interests and priorities of the African countries differ from ours and the EU, that should come as no surprise to anyone. We all operate in our own interests. It does, however,

reinforce the need to communicate better and more frequently in an effort to reconcile these differences. If we truly believe that the future of Africa is (and should be) in the hands of Africans, it hardly seems logical to exclude them on the basis of their interests being different. END COMMENT.

RAY